

The Corps Castle

The appropriateness of the turreted castle as a symbol of the Corps of Engineers is readily apparent. The medieval castle is inseparably connected with fortification and architecture. In heraldry, the castle and the tower are often used in a coat of arms or given as charges in the shield of persons who reduced them, were the first to mount their walls in an assault, or successfully defended them. In this country the term "castle" has been applied to the strongest of our early fortifications, such as Castle Pinckney in Charleston, South Carolina, and Castles Williams and Clinton in New York Harbor, which, together with the entire system of permanent defense of our country, are particular achievements of the Corps of Engineers.

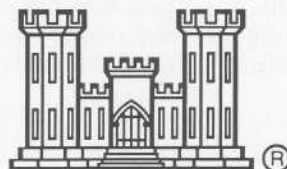
Possibly patterned after

one of the city gates of Verdun, France, the castle is a highly conventionalized form, without decoration or embellishment. The Army officially announced the adoption of the castle, to appear on the Corps of Engineers' uniform epaulettes and belt plate, in 1840. Soon afterwards, the cadets at West Point, all of whom were part of the Corps of Engineers until the Military Academy came under the control of the Army-at-large in 1866, also wore the castle. Army regulations first prescribed the use of the castle on the cap in 1841. Subsequently, the castle appeared on the shoulder knot; on saddle cloth as a collar ornament; and on the buttons. Although its design has changed many times, the castle, since its inception, has remained the distinctive symbol of the Corps of Engineers.



US Army Corps of Engineers ®

Modern castle adopted after the Corps of Engineers became a Major Army Command (MACOM).



Both the modern castle and the traditional castle became Registered Trademarks of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in November 1993.

Traditional castle.

The Essayons Button

The Corps of Engineers' oldest and most time-honored insignia is the exclusive Essayons Button. It has not changed in basic design since its first definitely known use during the War of 1812. It is still the required button for the Army Engineers' uniform.

Evidence which could establish the actual facts concerning the designing and adoption of the Essayons Button probably burned at West Point in 1838, when the building containing the library and earliest official Corps and Military Academy records caught fire.

However, while early Army regulations mentioned the "button of the Engineers... with only the device and motto heretofore established,"

apparently no authoritative detailed description of the button appeared until 1840. The Army prescribed new uniforms on February 18, 1840, in General Orders 7, AGO, which officially described the button as follows:

"An eagle holding in his beak a scroll with the word, 'Essayons,' a bastion with embrasures in the distance, surrounded by water, and rising sun; the figures to be of dead gold upon a bright field."

In 1902, when the Army adopted "regulation" buttons, it allowed only the Corps of Engineers to retain its own distinctive Essayons Button in recognition of the distinguished traditions that it symbolized.

